



# Fraud Newsletter

August 2007

*Sheriff Steve Mansfield*

## **Fraud and ID Theft Information – To Better Protect the Residents of Lewis County**

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*"If it's too good to be true  
it normally is"*

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**Fraud is simply a theft by trick. It can take the form of chain letters claiming huge amounts of cash to those who send money in or people claiming they will provide a service and never do.**

**Identity theft and identity fraud are terms used to refer to all types of crimes in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in a way that involves fraud or deception for economic gain. This newsletter is intended to keep the public informed of the most recent fraud schemes happening in our county. It will also provide resources to help you take precautions to protect yourself from these vicious crimes.**

### **PROTECT YOUR ID**

- 1** Always know who you are providing personal information to
- 2** If you use passwords to access accounts make sure to change them often
- 3** Never provide personal information in response to any unsolicited offer
- 4** Know the company you are dealing with when making online purchases

## **Current Scams and Frauds Hitting Lewis County**

### **Email Phishing Scams**

**One of the biggest problems in our world of rapid communication is thefts through Phishing Scams. These are the emails you receive that look like they came from a bank or other financial institution. They all start off with some claim that your account will be suspended if you don't take immediate action and direct you to a website to fix the problem. When you click on the link you are directed to a website that looks just like the official site for that company. They then ask for lots of personal information to fix the related problem. If you provide the information you have just fallen victim to the scam. By the time you realize something is wrong it is way too late. The following article will help you protect yourself from this type of theft.**

## 10 Tips to Avoid Phishing Scams

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*"Internet fraud is the fastest growing crime in the US"*

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**Whenever you're about to interact with a financial website or a site that asks for personal information, use the following tips to steer clear of phishers:**

1. Always type the address of the site you want to visit directly into your browser. Phishing e-mails use addresses that look legitimate, but send you to the fake site when you click.
2. When you visit the site, be alert to spelling and grammatical errors, bad formatting and spacing, and strange or inconsistent use of company logos. Phishing sites often make these kinds of mistakes.
3. Don't be fooled by the presence of genuine links and telephone numbers. Fake sites often include some accurate information to help trick people.
4. Security certificates (the lock icon representing "SSL") can be spoofed. If something doesn't feel right about the site, don't let your guard down just because you see the certificate.
5. Be especially suspicious of e-mail containing urgent warnings about account problems. These are designed to panic people and make them ignore their common sense.
6. Don't assume an e-mail is legitimate even if the sender's name appears to be the name of a legitimate institution. The "From" field in an e-mail can be faked to look legitimate.
7. Scammers use the address or URL to trick you by hiding their true nature at the end of a long address. When in doubt, call the institution for assistance before providing any personal information online.
8. Be cautious about using your main e-mail address to sign up for Web offers. Some sites allow addresses to be picked up by phishing gangs.
9. Use a stand-alone spam filter or a security suite with a built-in spam filter from a well-known vendor to reduce the number of phishing e-mails that make it to your inbox.
10. Use a browser with built-in phishing protection like Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox 2, and add additional anti-phishing protection by using a SiteAdvisor plug-in.

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*"Vigilance is the only real protection against Internet fraud"*

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**These tips are from an article by McAfee.com. To test your knowledge and ability to spot these types of scams visit:**  
**[http://www.siteadvisor.com/quizzes/phishing\\_0707/](http://www.siteadvisor.com/quizzes/phishing_0707/)**



The internet is a powerful tool used by both legitimate businesses and scam artists alike. Always take steps to protect yourself and your personal information as you would protect your home or car.

#### Other Resources

Phone Busters (Canadian Link) - <http://www.phonebusters.com/>

The Federal Citizen Information Center -  
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/scamsdesc.htm>

The Federal Trade Commission - <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>

The FBI Fraud Information page -  
<http://www.fbi.gov/maicases/fraud/fraudschemes.htm>

The Internet Crime Complaint Center - <http://www.ic3.gov/>

#### Lewis County Sheriff's Office Mission Statement

To make a positive difference for members of our community by seeking and finding ways to affirmatively promote, preserve and deliver a feeling of security, safety and quality service.



**Sheriff Steve Mansfield**

*Committed to make a difference.*